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PAGE 01 STATE 032246

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. CHINA: SIGNS POINT TO HUA'S STAYING POWER

OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG SEES THE APPOINTMENT OF HUA KUO-FENG AS ACTING PREMIER AS AN INDICATION THAT THE CHINESE PEOPLE ARE BEING PREPARED FOR A LONG INTERVAL OF HUA AS THE LEADING FIGURE IN GOVERNMENT. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD NOT MAKE SENSE IF TENG HSIAO-PING OR OTHERS WERE SERIOUS CONTENDERS FOR THE PREMIERSHIP. HUA'S BACKGROUND DOES NOT, HOWEVER, SUGGEST HIS POLICIES WILL DIFFER FROM TENG'S:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 032246

--THREE TIMES IN HIS CAREER HE HAS COME UNDER ATTACK

BY LEFTISTS, AND PERSISTENT REPORTS CREDIT HUA WITH A KEY ROLE IN CHINA'S MODERATE POLICIES SINCE THE FALL OF LIN PIAO.

--HE LACKS STRONG TIES TO THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY.

--HIS EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS BEEN LIMITED.
(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) HONG KONG 1433, 2/9.)

2. RESULTS OF ASAD'S MEETING WITH FRANGIE AND KARAME

ACCORDING TO EMBASSY BEIRUT, ASAD'S MEETING FEBRUARY 7 WITH KARAME AND FRANGIE CONCENTRATED ON THE LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN ASPECT OF THE LEBANESE CRISIS RATHER THAN THE POLITICAL REFORM PACKAGE, WHICH WILL REQUIRE FURTHER NEGOTIATION. IN ADDITION:

--"MODERATE" PALESTINIAN LEADERS HAVE BEEN MEETING IN DAMASCUS TO WORK OUT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT, AND MANY OBSERVERS ARE INTERPRETING RECENT COMMENTS BY FATAH LUMINARY ABU IYAD AS VEILED SIGNALS TO "REJECTIONIST" ELEMENTS THAT THE PLA STANDS READY TO REACT TO ANY PROVOCATION.

--SHOULD INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS INCREASE, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES SYRIAN MEDIATORS COULD PRESS FOR ELIMINATION OF DISSIDENT FACTIONS.

EMBASSY DAMASCUS BELIEVES THAT ALTHOUGH FRANGIE'S VISIT PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE VENEER ON SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT, THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP IS AWARE OF THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED IF LEBANON IS TO RETURN TO NORMAL. THEY APPEAR TO ASSUME THAT THE PLA PRESENCE IN LEBANON MUST BE PROLONGED FOR PERHAPS TWO MONTHS TO PERMIT A REBUILDING OF LOCAL MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES. (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 717 AND BEIRUT 1273, 2/9.)

3. EGYPT, PLO CRITICIZE JORDAN

KING HUSSEIN'S DECISION TO RECONVENE PARLIAMENT AND INCLUDE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 032246

WEST BANK REPRESENTATION HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY THE PLO AND THE EGYPTIAN PRESS. THE LATTER CLAIMS THAT:

--JORDAN HAS RENOUNCED THE RABAT ACCORD AND IS MOVING TO PLAY A LARGER ROLE IN A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

--PLO ANGER AT HUSSEIN SHOWS THEY SHOULD CONSIDER EGYPT THE PALESTINIANS' BEST FRIEND.

JORDAN RESPONDED BY INDIRECTLY QUESTIONING THE PLO'S EFFECTIVENESS AND MAINTAINED THAT THE PLO HAD BEEN INFORMED OF JORDAN'S INTENTIONS LONG AGO.

EMBASSY AMMAN DOUBTS HUSSEIN WILL TRY TO ASSUME A GREATER ROLE IN WEST BANK NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF OTHER ARAB STATES. (CONFIDENTIAL) AMMAN 705 AND (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) CAIRO 1684, 2/9.)

4. ARGENTINA: LABOR LOOKS TO THE ARMY

EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN BUENOS AIRES HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY LABOR LEADERS SEEKING US REACTION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY TAKEOVER.

--LABOR'S UNHAPPINESS WITH THE PRESIDENT MAKES AN OPEN RUPTURE LIKELY SOON UNLESS MRS. PERON MOVES TO RESTORE ITS INFLUENCE.

--WHILE THE LABOR UNIONS WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO MOUNT TOKEN OPPOSITION TO A COUP, THEY WOULD PROBABLY SUPPORT THE MILITARY IN DEFENSE OF TRADE UNIONISM.

THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO ALL INQUIRIES HAS BEEN THAT THE FORM OF ARGENTINA'S GOVERNMENT IS A PURELY INTERNAL AFFAIR. (CONFIDENTIAL) BUENOS AIRES 834, 2/9.)

5. MOBUTU'S RESHUFFLE PRESAGES AUSTERITY, SHIFT TO MPLA

EMBASSY KINSHASA INTERPRETS MOBUTU'S RECENT GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE AS PREPARATION FOR A SHIFT TOWARD ACCOMMODATION WITH THE MPLA AND TOWARD A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC BELT-TIGHTENING.
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PAGE 04 STATE 032246

ING.

--THE TRANSFER OF HARD-LINE FOREIGN MINISTER BULA TO THE MINISTRY OF ORIENTATION ALLOWS ROOM TO MOVE TOWARD THE MPLA.

--MOBUTU HAS SHAKEN UP HIS GOVERNING ELITE TO PREPARE FOR A RETREAT FROM HIS DREAM OF INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS, WHICH WILL NOW BE SACRIFICED TO THE RIGORS OF THE IMPENDING IMF STABILIZATION PROGRAM. (CONFIDENTIAL) KINSHASA 1126, 2/9.)

6. SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN TENSION GROWS

EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA REPORTS THAT ETHIOPIA HAS PLACED ITS

ARMED FORCES ON THE HIGHEST STATE OF ALERT. THE ALERT ESCALATES THE TENSION BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA AND UNDERSCORES ETHIOPIAN SUSPICION OF SOMALI INTENTIONS TOWARD THE FRENCH TERRITORY OF THE AFARS AND ISSAS.

MEANWHILE, EMBASSY NAIROBI REPORTS A SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMATIC FLARE-UP.

--ON FEBRUARY 6, THE ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO KENYA SPARKED AN EXCHANGE WITH THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR BY DISPLAYING TO THE PRESS A SOMALI MAP SHOWING DJIBOUTI, A PART OF ETHIOPIA, AND NORTHEAST KENYA AS UNREDEEMED SOMALI TERRITORIES.

--THE SOMALI AMBASSADOR RESPONDED A DAY LATER WITH CHARGES THAT FRANCE, ETHIOPIA AND THE US PLANNED TO ATTACK SOMALIA. (SECRET) ADDIS ABABA 1607 AND (UNCLASSIFIED) NAIROBI 1275, 2/9.)

7. ITALY: DC MOVING TOWARD ONE PARTY GOVERNMENT

FOLLOWING FRUITLESS ATTEMPTS TO EXTRACT MORE BINDING SUPPORT FROM THE SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS, MORO MET FEBRUARY 8 WITH PRESIDENT LEONE, WHO OPENLY EXPRESSED HIS BACKING FOR AN ALL-DC GOVERNMENT. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 032246

--PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI PUBLICLY CRITICIZED FACTION LEADER ANDREOTTI AND CAST HIS LOT WITH THE PLAN FOR AN ALL-DC GOVERNMENT.

--NEITHER DC PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS NOR THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, DESPITE MAJOR OPPOSITION, WILL PUT THE MATTER TO A VOTE, AND BOTH SEEM RESIGNED TO ACCEPT MORO'S DECISION TO PRESS AHEAD. (CONFIDENTIAL) ROME 2179, 2/9.)
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